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Collaboration And Low-Cost Solutions Improve Safety On Laurens County Bridge



For 65 years, drivers travelling along Springhaven Road in Laurens County have been carried over Blackwater Creek by a small bridge with one unique feature – it lacks side guard rails to help keep motorists safely on the bridge. As a Band I Project of the Transportation Investment Act (TIA), the Springhaven Bridge has received a low-cost, yet innovative facelift that added guard rails and update the bridge's structure to greatly improve driver safety, particularly among the 1,200 West Laurens High School students who cross the bridge each school day.

“The new bridge put in place was much needed as the old bridge was very narrow and in ill repair. It was not appropriate for the level of traffic utilizing this road. The widening of the bridge now provides for a much safer road with better driving conditions for everyone, especially our young student drivers,” said Jon Martin, the District 2 County Commissioner.

With a budget of only \$162,500, engineers were motivated to create a solution that upheld TIA's promise of completing projects on-time and under budget. Rather than just replacing the bridge in its original form, engineers transformed the bridge into a 67.5' long two-span structure with steel three-rail barriers bolted into the deck on both sides of the bridge, in lieu of the traditional concrete barrier normally prevalent on bridges of this type.

Laurens County Public Works and two independent contractors teamed up to keep project

costs low. Contech Engineered Solutions designed the bridge, fabricated the steel and provided technical oversight on the County's contribution to the bridge, while Georgia-based contractor Hitson Construction manufactured the steel barriers off-site to expedite the completion of the project and minimize the impact on motorists. Additionally, Hitson collaborated with county's public works department to construct the new bridge. Hitson construction drove the piling and poured the deck, while the County completed the demolition, set the beams, welded the deck pans, and installed the bridge railing.

"The efficiency in which this project was completed was an important factor to us as well. We wanted to have as little impact on the local and school traffic as possible. The turnaround time on the entire project was roughly four months which anyone with experience with bridge replacement will tell you is impressive," Martin explained.

Martin also states that Springhaven Bridge renovation is a prime example of what citizens can expect from TIA funded projects.

"With the funding provided by TIA and the partnership between GDOT and Laurens County to get this project finished on-time and under budget, I believe this project is clear evidence of the purpose of the TIA and the goals it was designed to accomplish for the citizens of Georgia."

Forty-six counties and their respective cities comprise the three regional districts that approved the TIA referendum in July 2012. Cumulatively, they are expected to self-generate approximately \$1.6 Billion in new revenue dedicated to local transportation improvements. All projects were selected by regional commission roundtables of local elected officials after much public input. Seventy-five percent of the revenues will be utilized for the construction of these roundtable pre-selected projects while the remaining 25 percent will be disbursed to the regions' governments each month on a predetermined formula basis for discretionary use on local transportation-related efforts. For more information on Georgia DOT, please visit www.dot.ga.gov or you also may follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/transportationinvestmentact) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/TIAatGDOT>).